Memorandum Submitted by Indian Newspaper Society

1935. SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Indian Newspaper Society has submitted a memorandum to his Financer;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) what is Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI RAMESHWAR THAKUR): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Indian Newspaper Society in their Pre-Budget Memorandum had asked for decanalisation of import of newsprint, release of foreign exchange for import of standard and glazed newsprint; spares and consumables; abolition of customs duty on glazed newsprint and abolition of auxilary duty etc.

(c) In the current budget, Government have abolished customs duty on glazed newsprint.

Denial of Foreign Exchange to Scientist

1936. SHRI P. UPENDRA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the RBI has denied foreign exchange to Prof. S. Chandrasekhar, the world famous scientist, to attend a conference on liquid crystal devices in Japan; and

(b) if so, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI RAMESHWAR THAKUR): (a) and (b) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Sticky Advances made by State Bank of India

1937. SHRI RAJNI RANJAN SAHU: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) what is the total sticky advances made by the State Bank of India and other banks who have got their branches in foreign countries;

(b) whether his Ministry has been able to identify these sticky and non-returnable advances/loans; and

(c) if so what action Government propose to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI DALBIR SINGH): (a) and (b) In accordance with the statutes governing the public sector banks as also in terms of the practices and usages customary among bankers, the banks do not disclose the quantum of bad and doubtful debts for which provision has been made to the satisfaction of their statutory auditors as also the amount of bad debts written off.

(c) Reserve Bank of India are seized of the problem of loan losses at overseas branches. Banks are exploring possibilities of realising their dues through debt settlement proposals, sale of sovereign debt/securities in the secondary market and taking legal action where necessary.

Income Tax Raids on a Pharmaceutical Company

1938. SHRI MENTAY PADMANABHAM: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Income Tax Department had conducted raids in November 1991 on the premises of a leading pharmaceutical company in Hyderabad;

(b) if so, what are the details of assets and cash seized from this company;

(c) what is the name of the company; and

(d) what are the details of action taken or proposed to be taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI RAMESHWAR THAKUR): (a) to (c) Searches were conducted at the premises of M/Biological 'E' Ltd. Hyderabad, in

November, 1991. During these searches, the following assets were seized:—

(Rs. in lakhs)

Assets	Seizure
1. Cash	16.85
2. Jewellery	76.05
3. Other assets	
(a) Demand Drafts	40.00
(b) Share Certificates	107.92
(c) Silver articles	1.59
TOTAL:	149.51
G. TOTAL:	242.41

(d) Scrutiny of documents seized and follow up action as called for under the Income-tax Act have been taken up.

United Bank of India's Failure to Open New Branches in North-Eastern Zone

1939. SHRI DAVID LEDGER: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the United Bank of India has failed to open new branches in the North-Eastern Zone despite Reserve Bank of India's instructions; and

(b) if so, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI DALBIR SINGH): (a) and (b) Under Branch Licensing Policy 1985-90 Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has allotted 79 rural and semi-urban centres to United Bank of India for opening branches in the North-Eastern region and the bank had opened offices at 65 centres. Thus, it would be not correct to state that United Bank of India has failed to open branches in the North-Eastern region. However, the banks do face difficulties in opening branches due to lack of basic infrastructural facilities like non-availability of suitable premises, all weather road and communication facilities at the allotted centres.

Functioning of Zonal Office of United Bank of India at Guwahati

1940. SHRI DAVID LEDGER: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the zonal office of the United Bank of India at Guwahati has failed to fulfil its objectives due to the apathetic attitude of the bank's headquarters at Calcutta as a result of which the industrial relations of the Bank are suffering; and

(b) if so, what steps are being taken to improve the situation and restore the credibility of the bank and the confidence of the employees?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI DALBIR SINGH): (a) and (b) United Bank of India have reported that the Zonal Office of the Bank at Guwahati is functioning as a focal point of control. The working of the Zonal Office at Guwahati, like other zonal Offices, is reviewed by the Head Office every quarter and remedial action as warranted is taken. The bank has further reported that there is some shortage of staff in the North Eastern Zone mainly because of certain difficulties in posting personnel to that Zone from other Zones. However, efforts are being made to sort out these difficulties.

Extension of Agricultural and Rural Debt Relief Scheme, 1990

1941. SHRI VITHALBHAI M. PATEL: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) what is the number of farmers who have got benefit under the Agricultural and Rural Debt Relief Scheme, 1990, in different States of the country;

(b) whether it is a fact that Government have received proposal to give benefit of the scheme to the SC/ST members who have borrowed from Nationalised Banks through Corporation;

(c) whether Government also propose to give benefit of the Scheme to the borrowers who have paid their dues regularly;

(d) how much amount has been released to the State of Gujarat;

(e) whether the Central Government